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THE ADDRESSE

OF SOME

Ministers of Christ

+ 52 IN THE

Isle of Wight, & County of Southampton,

To the People of their respective Charges,
by way of

EXHORTATION,

to Discharge their parts of those two

Great and Necessary DUTIES

Private Conference

AND

CATECHISING.

Prov. 22.6. *Train up (or Catechize) a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

Gen. 18.19. *I know Abraham, that he will command his children
and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.*

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18, 14, 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2, 1

ADDRESSES

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of Christ in the Isle of *Wight*, and County
of *Southampton*, to the People of their respec-
tive Charges, by way of Exhortation, to
discharge their parts of those two great
and necessary Duties,

Private Conference & Catechising.

Dearlly Beloved,



That the good tidings which the
glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ
brings to sinners, was first heard
at *Jerusalem*, was a mercy, a
great mercy to the *Jews*: That
it was not confin'd to them alone,
but ordered to passe among all o-

Luc. 24 47.

ther Nations, was a gracious, a very exceeding
gracious dispensation to us sinners of the *Gentiles*.
That it found out this obscure Angle of the world,
where we live, so early, that our priority before
many Countries in the enjoyment of so invaluable
a blessing, is justly accounted amongst the highest
of our Prerogatives, was an evidence of the Lords
peculiar goodnesse to our Progenitors; and we are
not so regardlesse of the Land of our Nativity, nor

so forgetfull of the Rocke from whence we were hew'n, and the hole of the Pit from whence we were digged, as not to think our selves enough concern'd in *their* mercies, to blesse God for them.

Deut. 32.7, 10.

And as the God of our mercies did so seasonably prevent us, so hath his goodnesse and mercy all along followed us in affording means of light and life to us, from one generation to another. If we *remember the days of old, and consider the years of many generations: if we ask our fathers they will shew us, and our Elders they will teach us*, in what a deplorable condition of *Ignorance, Idolatry, and Atheisme*, and how deeply plung'd in all Imaginable *Abominations*, the Lord found us, when he sent us by his Gospel Jesus Christ *the Light of the world*, with means enough to direct us out of *darknesse and the shadow of Death, and to guid our feet into the ways of peace*. And though the interposition of our sins betwixt heaven and us hath not suffered the Sun of the Gospel for many ages to break out upon us, in its full glory, yet hath it not at any time been able *totally* to eclipse it, since first it arose upon the Nation. And this we mention upon no other account than to remember you of our being brought forth in a Land of Blessings, which we think it our duty to look back upon as a providence too full of goodnesse to be despised.

But (as in which our own concerns are more specially wrapt up) we desire most of all to spend our serious considerations upon the Lords gracious dealing, as to Gospel mercies, with this Nation, in our days. That *holy arme* which scattered among us means of Conversion and life in former

mer times, clothed, is now made *bare*, those *compassions* that did then flow from divine bowels, but at an ordinary rate, are now *advanced*. God that commanded the clouds from above to let fall drops *then*, hath *now* opened the windows of Heaven, and raineth down large and plentiful showers of his Gospel into our bosomes: our blessings have prevailed above the blessings of our progenitors. When, or where did the King of Saints ever ride up and down, in his ordinance of preaching the Gospel in so much Glory and Triumph, as in this Age and Nation! This blessing is doubled, is multiplied upon us, in respect of other times and places, whether we look backward or round about us, we are presented with a necessity of acknowledging that *the light of the Moon, with us, is as the light of the Sunne, and the light of the Sunne, as the light of seven days.*

Isa. 30. 26.

And as we desire to look upon these gracious outgoings of the Lord towards us with thankful and glad hearts, as they are a plentiful provision of means to bring us to the great ends we ought to aime at, the service and eternall enjoyment of himselfe, who is alone the creatures best and greatest both *master* and *wages*; so when we do on the other hand consider how disproportionable we are in our returnes, how unanswerable in our principles and practises to such mercies, how few attain the ends but now mentioned, how many are grossly ignorant even of the Principles of that Religion they think to be saved by, how many who have the *droppings*, the *raine* of the Sanctuary, coming often upon them, do bring forth nothing but *thornes* and *briars*, and what a lamentable propensity too many do

do discover to *be led away by the error of the wicked*, our hearts begin to gather blacknesse, and are seized upon with feare, lest these sweet mercies should be swift witnesses against us, and in stead of converting us to Jesus Christ, our deliverer from the wrath to come, should be converted by us into such aggravations of our sins, as will leave us in a lesse tolerable condition than *Sodom and Gomorrah*, at the day of Judgment; and we are very well assured, it is every good mans duty, to prevent (as much as in him lies) so sad an issue of such invaluable blessings.

The Duty, we say, of all good men, but specially of Ministers, whose office it is to lay out themselves in a constant attendance upon the good of Souls: upon which account we the unworthy Ministers of Christ, whose Names are under-written, having through mercy been stirred up to improve our Talents, to the uttermost, for the advancement of the Kingdome and Interest of our deare Redeemer, and the eternall welfare of you immortal Soules, who are respectively committed to our Charge, and having waited upon God in a way of earnest prayer, and solemn humiliation, for directions to that purpose, have joyntly agreed to communicate our thoughts, desires, and purposes unto you, by this Paper, hoping that we shall find it a very good expedient to facilitate so great a work.

Brethren! we have seriously considered, not so much the necessity of Knowledge to salvation, (for who is not convinc'd of this, that is convinc'd of any thing?) but, how little, or no acquaintance

tance many of our people have with the things of God, how unhappy a qualification this is for any thing that is evill, and what unavoidable advantages the Devill hath against those poor souls, whom he is sure to set upon in the dark. Though we are constrained to beleieve, that some are very well able to digest their convictions, and have light enough to see themselves wallowing in the pollutions of the world; yet can we not but be perswaded of very many, that both the *Mother & Nurse* of their miscarriages is their *ignorance*, being never yet possessed of so much illumination, as throughly to perceive the filthy and damnable nature of sin, the necessity of an interest in Christ, and of that work of grace by his Spirit upon their souls, *without which no man shall see the Lord*. Our Charity prevailing with us, at least to think that if the generality of men were able to see the wrath of God, and the torments of hell in every sinne, they would not doat upon it; and to see *Christ exalted to be a Prince, to give repentance and remission of sins*, they would not by their wilfull impieties send so many messages to him every day that *they will not have this man to reign over them*. If they knew more, they would live better, if they did not see so little, they would not sin so much; they would not so constantly go out of their way, did they not go in the dark.

Your selves, *Brethren*, are our witnesses, that in the course of our Ministry, we have made it much of our businesse to informe mens judgments, being very sure of this, that unlesse we could have a knowing people, we should never have a gracious

B

people,

Rom. 6. 23
Acts 4. 12.
Heb. 12. 14.

Acts 5. 31.

Luk. 19. 14.

people; as we are to blesse God for any the least successe of his Gospel to this purpose, we are also deeply to be humbled that it hath been no more, that very many are ignorant still, and not able to evidence themselves owners of so much knowledge, as may be presumed to let in Christ by Faith into their souls; our deep sense of which hath brought us together, put us upon our prayers to God, and a mutuall contribution of advice and counsell to one another, what further course to take, that by the blessing of God, might promote your edification at a better rate, be a way to a speedier implantation of Light and Grace in your souls, and make room in your heads and hearts for the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our publick preaching.

To which end and purpose, for every one of us to revive and constantly to practise the too long neglected duties of *Private Conference* and *Catechizing* in our respective Charges, is a course which we have apprehended to promise us the most comfortable successe. We have therefore unanimously agreed and resolved, to adde to our more publick ministeriall labours, the faithfull serious and constant discharge of these duties, that by laying out our talents as many ways as they may possibly be improveable, for the good of all, we may, by the grace of Christ going along with us, be instrumentall in saving some. Now our endeavours shall be to instruct

- By { 1. *Catechizing*, all within our respective Charges that are under the Government of others.
- { 2. *Private Conference*, all the rest.

Not

Not that we would be understood to exclude any that are reducible to either of these ranks from the benefit of both, or (so much as an intimation) to mean it, not to be the duty of all, to submit to both; but have thus propounded it, out of a condescension to that weaknesse (of too much force upon most mens Spirits) which suggesteth it to be a matter of shame, for persons that are aged to be *Catechized*; but never inclineth them to so much as the least blushing that they have need of it. So your selves being able to testifie, that we are in a manner necessitated to this *method*, we shall beg the conjunction of your prayers with ours, for a blessing from Heaven upon it, and (in as few words as we conveniently may) bespeak your compliance with us in it. And

First as to the *Catechizing* of all that are under the Government (we mean the domestickall Government) of others. We have a request to make

To { 1 The Governing party.
2 The Governed.

I. To *Masters, Mistresses*, and such as have the care of others in their families committed to them; our earnest desire is, that no neglect of yours may bring upon you the guilt of accessaries to the obstruction of so good a work, which you will by no means be able to prevent, but by contributing what you can to the promotion of it, by teaching your children and servants the grounds and principles of Religion at home, that they may at least remember them; and by causing them to come under our publick examination at the Church, that we may see whether they do, and give them farther instru-

1 Tim. 2. 4.

ctions that they may profitably understand them. That the means of bringing persons to Christ and heaven is to bring them *to the knowledge of the Truth*, or that its your duty to endeavour the bringing of your families by the same way, to the same end, We will not be so uncharitable as to think you have any need to have it proved, and what fitter way can you attempt the discharge of this duty in, then by *Catechizing* them? *If you were to fill*, (tis an old, a common, but very pertinent similitude, and perhaps may stick by you) *a company of exceeding narrow mouth'd Glasses, the likeliest way to do it, is by taking them singly in your hands, and dropping into each by little and little, as it will goe down, and not by setting them altogether, and throwing great quantities of water upon them* But, this together with your duty about it, and the many arguments you have to discharge it, we shall offer you more at large in these following Considerations, which we shall crave leave to presse, as the Duty concerns

- your {
 1. *Whole family.*
 2. *Children.*
 3. *Servants.*

1. *In relation to your whole family.*

1. *Consider.* Whether God hath not committed unto you a guardianship over the souls of your families, and it be not upon that account your duty to take care for the discharge of theirs? 'Tis a comprehensive instance which you have in *Exod. 20 10.* That your sons, daughters, men and maid-servants keep the *Sabbath* holy, is an injunction laid immediately upon you; you must remember that they do *Sanctifie* it, and this is not done, but by spending the

Exod. 20. 10.

the whole time in the private and publique exercises of Gods worship and service. And how many principles of Religion must be knowne, before this can be done? and we cannot doubt of your easie grant of this consequence, that if you must see your families doe those duties, which they can never doe except they be instructed, then must you be their instructors, unlesse you can suppose, there may lye a strict obligation upon you to accomplish such an end, which leaves you under no engagement at all to use the *meanes*.

2 *Consider*. How speciall an eye of favour God carries towards those *Heads* of families, who lay out their care that all under their roof may know and serve him. Friendship with God is the choicest evidence of his favour, communication of secrets the highest declaration of friendship, and this will the Lord bestow upon *Abraham* a peculiar share in, being a person that would *command his household to keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. 18. 19. And from hence doe learned men collect, that it was, in that age, the holy practice of such as feared God to *Catechize* their families, and instruct them, concerning the *Creation of the world, fall of man, destruction of the old world, Gods providence, the Messiah to be revealed, everlasting life to come, and such like*. If you neglect *Abrahams* practice, you are never like to come to *Abrahams* Honour, who was called *The friend of God*, James 2. 23.

3 *Consider*. What care the Spirit of God takes to keep alive their memories to all generations, who have planted religion in their families. *Aquila and Priscilla had a Church in their house*, 1 Cor. 16. 19.

Nymphas

Nymphas and *Philemon* had *Churches* in their houses, *Coloss. 4. 15. Philem. 2.* not only in that they were hospitable to the Beleevers, and entertained them in their houses, or that the meetings of Christians for the worship of God was wont to be in their houses, but also in regard of the piety of their families, each household might be called a Church, a company taught to know God, and to serve him. And *Cornelius*, was a man that feared God with all his house, *Act. 10. 2.* These are mentioned with Honour, and have been so neare sixteen hundred yeares already, and shall be so as long as the Sun and Moone endureth.

4 *Consider.* The pronenesse of youth to every thing that is evill. If you doubt what the inexperience, rashnesse, heat, pride, ignorance, and confidence, which most in their youth have a sufficient stock of, may put them upon, look back upon what you were your selves. When *David* asketh *where-withall shall a young man cleanse his way?* *Psal. 119. 9.* is it not an inimation that *his way* is ordinarily thorow the pollutions of the world? And when *David* prayes, *Remember not the sins of my youth,* *Psal. 25. 7.* doe ye thinke there be very many in the world, that in their age, have no need to goe to the Throne of Grace, in the same errand? And when *Job* complaines, *Thou makest me to possesse the sins of my youth,* *Job 13. 26.* we thinke twill follow that *Jobs* youthfull time was his worst time. Tis reported of *Bel-larmine*, that when the Priest came to absolve him, he could not remember any particular sin to confesse, till he went back in his thoughts as farre as his youth; either the *Cardinalls* memory failed him,

or

or *youth* will be sinfull, though no age else be; tis doubtlesse the worst *season* of the best men, and for grosse and scandalous miscarriages, most commonly, of the worst too.

Now, wherewithall shall these young ones cleanse their wayes? what meanes must be pitcht upon to mortifie *youthfull lusts*, but the word of God? and what fitter expedient for the application of that remedy to this disease, then to let it into their Heads and Hearts by *Catechizing*? by infusing those Scriptures that doe assert the damnable nature of sin, the necessity of regeneration, the Tendency of the course they are in, to their everlasting destruction, &c.

Psal. 119. 9.

5 *Consider*. On the other Hand, that if ever you meane, your families shall learne the wayes of God, you lose (at least) the fairest probability of successe, if you fall not upon teaching them in their younger yeares. Let us crave liberty to lay, and leave before you, but these *Observations*.

1 *Observe* the fitness of that season to receive instruction; that (besides our *originall* pollution) we are very early capable of sinning, may be discovered even in little children every day. I know not (saith *Augustine*) the sins I committed in my infancy, yet I know that then I sinned, and he knew it from hence, that he had observed *anger* and *envy* in sucking children: he was (he confesseth) a little child, and a great sinner: and *Gregory* gives us an account of horrid blasphemies by a child of five yeares old: we will not say that goodnesse hath so timely, or so easie an entertainment as sin hath, we know reasons to the contrary; you will how ever receive no damage

mage by beginning seasonably, you were better lose some labour than any Time. We have read of some that have been ordained to the office of publique Readers in the Church at *eight* years old, of some suffering *Martyrdom* at *thirteene*, of others discovering a capacity of learning what ever you would take the pains to teach them very betime. We beseech you not to pretend such a disproportion between the *Intellectualls* of these, and of the young ones in your families, as is enough to excuse a neglect of *Catechizing* them, till you have tryed; and when you have, let it not serve your turne, for a neglect of this duty to the rest that are of understanding enough to learn other things in their younger yeares (as we said) you have hopes of fastening upon them the Things of God. Prepossession is a great matter; the more time you give sin and vanity to grow upon them, the lesse hopes you have of planting in them the mysteries of Religion.

2 *Observe*, How few there be, whose youth hath been suffered to passe in ignorance, that are brought to the saving knowledge of God in Christ in their elder dayes. *Habits* are difficultly removed, and how long will a vessell savour of the first liquor you season it with? If ever you meane to meet your families in Heaven, guide them thitherward at their first setting out.

6 *Consider*. How much Religion is concerned in this duty of *Catechizing*; set it up, you provide abundantly for the welfare of it, you goe the way to supply her with professors, *knowing, solid, settled*, such as doe espouse her because they love her, and love her because they know her; neglect it, and you con-

contribute to the ruine of it, if she have any other followers, then such as are *prophane, ignorant, ungrounded, unstable*, carried about with every winde of Doctrine, such as she will be ashamed to own for her children, and who had not own'd her, but that it was the first they lighted upon, she will have no cause in the world to thank you for it. This is so necessary a course to settle people in what they first take in, that the *Jesuites* boast themselves the *Grand Conservators* of the *Romish Religion*, in that they are *Catechizers*, and they have formerly stirred up one another to all possible diligence in this work by the example of the *Protestants*. We are sorry and ashamed, that if for divers yeares last past the *Jesuites* had wanted a provocation to *Catechizing* from the example of *Protestants*, they would not have been able to have fetcht it hence. We beseech you Brethren, let not our Religion have occasion to complaine from any neglect of yours, that she cannot take up this confessed advantage against her enemy, nor prophanesse, ignorance, popery, errours, heresies, and blasphemies, to acknowledge, that they owe their planting, watering and increase, amongst us, to nothing more, then that we have not seasoned the younger yeares of our respective families, with better things. Now

2. *In relation to your Children.*

Though what we have said of *Catechizing*, as a duty to your whole family, we know you will conclude, doth concerne the fruit of your own bodies, the choicest part of it, yet we shall crave leave to presse it more particularly, and to beseech you againe to lay it to Heart.

1. How expressly God layes it upon you as a duty.
2. How many Engagements there be upon you, conscientiously to discharge it.

For the former, because what we are desiring of you, is a duty consisting of two branches. 1. To Catechize them your selves. 2. To send them being thus prepared, to be further instructed and taught to understand the grounds of Religion, unto us; we are willing to let you see both parts of the duty.

1. For your *Catechizing them at home*, we shall adde to what hath been said already,

1. Those precepts of the *Scripture*, where this charge is laid upon parents in expresse *Termes*; we shall but name the places, and leave them to your meditation, and practice, *Deut. 4. 9, 10. and Chap. 6. 6, 7. and Chap. 11. 19. Exod. 12. 24, 26, 27. Exod. 13. 8, 14, 15. Josh. 4. 6, 7, 21, 22. Psal. 78. 5, 6. Joel 1. 3. Eph. 6. 4. Pro. 22. 6.*

2. The Example of parents fearing God, whose practice of this duty is upon record; as *Abraham*, *Gen. 18. 19. David*, *1 Chron. 28. 9.* which we hope you will beleeve, was written for your *Instruction*. And lest you that are *Mothers* should think your selves excused, we beseech you to consider, that as a child must receive the instruction of his father, so he must not forsake the Law of his mother, *Pro. 1. 8.* She is described to be a vertuous woman, that openeth her mouth with wisdom, *Pro. 31. 26.* that teacheth her children their duty both to God and man. Not only did *Solomons* father teach him, *Pro. 4. 4.* but we have the Prophecie also that his mother taught him, *Pro. 31. 1.* *Timothy* knew the holy *Scripture* from a child, *2 Tim. 3. 15.* and you cannot doubt of the contribution,

*Mercer. &c.
Fausen. in
Pro. 31. 26.*

bation, his *mother*, yea and his *Grandmother* afforded to this Timely acquaintance of his with the Things of God, when you reade the *Character* you have of them (*Chap. 1. 5.*) under the hand of an *Apostle*. And that *John the Evangelist* found of her children walking in Truth, had not so much redounded to the praise of that *Eleēt Lady*, to whom he writes his *Second Epistle*, if she had not instructed them in the way. *Augustine* writes of his mother *Monica*, that she planted precepts of life in his minde, by her words, watered them with her teares, and nourished them by her example. You will, we doubt not, look upon these holy women who Trusted in God, as very worthy to be imitated, in so great a duty.

2 Joh. 1. 4.

2. For sending your children to us, we shall briefly offer you the duty of it, in these particulars.

1. We are to feed the *Lambs* of Christ, as well as his sheep, they are part of our charge, who are to watch over *their* soules as well as yours.

Joh. 21. 15.

2. That the Sabbath be sanctified by the *children*, is by an expresse Law of God charged as a duty upon the *parent*, of which already from *Exod. 20. 10.*

3. A great part of the sanctification of this day is in coming solemnly together to waite upon God in the duties of his worship, and particularly to heare his word, and to be instructed by it, *What wee ought to beleve concerning God, and what duties God requires of us.* This your Christianity will not give you leave to doubt of.

4. This duty you cannot discharge as to your children, but by causing them to beare a part in all the publique duties of that day which they are capable of, and particularly to be that way instructed, both

as to *faith* and *manners*, in which they are likeliest to receive most benefit, and we need not tell you again, that this is to be *Catechized*.

For the *Second*; *How many Engagements there be upon you to perform this duty?* have we any need to say a jot more then this, that they are *our children*; how many *motives* doth this deare and tender relation wrap up in it? we had no intention to leave a *volumne* with you, and so shall but *consider*,

Joh. 3. 6.

Job 25. 4.

Joh. 3. 3, 5.

1. The need they have to have this course taken with them; Do they not come into the world with foules, altogether as naked as their bodies? nothing but *filth* upon the one, nothing but sin upon the other; and *the wages even of this sin, is eternall death*, *Rom. 6. 23*. What should not we doe, that they may be *borne againe*?

Gen. 5. 3.

Coloss. 3. 10.

Eph. 4. 24.

2. As our children are borne in sin, so tis by our meanes, we are instruments of it; sin is conveyed to them thorow our Loines, being sinfull our selves, we beget them (as *Adam* did *Seth*) in our own likeness, after our *Image*. How prevailingly should this move us to be instrumental in their cure, as we have been in their disease! to direct them to the righteousness of the *Second Adam*, as we derived unto them the sin of the *first*; that having begotten them after our own, they may be begotten and borne againe, after the *Image of God*, and how great a part of that consisteth in *knowledge*! and without which *Righteousness* and *True Holiness*, the other parts of it, are hoped for in vaine, as long as it is *life eternall to know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*. Joh. 17. 3.

3. The Ardency and strength of our affections toward

ward our *children*, and how many *other* wayes we are wont to expresse it, by our longing for them before we have them (*Gen.* 15. 2. *Gen.* 30. 1. *1 Sam.* 1. 10, 11.) our joy and contentment afterward (*Joh.* 16. 21.) the inestimable value we set upon them (*2 Kings* 4. 13, 14, 15, 16) our industrious care to keep them (*Gen.* 42. 36, 38. *2 Kings* 4. 22, 24, 27, 30. *Luc.* 8. 41, 42. *Joh.* 7. 47, 49. *1 Kings* 14. 4.) our extreame grieve when we lose them (*Gen.* 37. 33, 34, 35. *2 Sam.* 18. 33. and *Chap.* 19. 2, 4 *Mat.* 2. 18.) our *Sympathizing* with them in all conditions, smarting under their paine, (*Mark* 9. 22. *Mat.* 15. 22.) and feeling the comfort of their welfare, (*Gen.* 45. 27, 28.) Look, *Beloved*, into your bowells, or if you cannot finde them there, look into the Scriptures, we have here brought you, and see if these be not the affections of parents towards their *children*, and if these expresse themselves at such a rate, so many *other* wayes, Can there be a stronger motive to lay them out the best way? upon their *souls*? by taking care that they may be instructed unto the Kingdom of God?

Let us pause a while, and argue the case with our selves a little, or if you will let us *catechize* our selves upon this point, and aske such Questions as these; Did we *long* to have children, and shall we now suffer them to perish? Shall we contentedly see them in such a condition, that (if they continue in it) it had been good for them they had never been born? If their souls be not filled with good, is not an *untimely birth* better then they? If our children be not brought to the knowledge of God, and have no provision made them for *eternity*; will not *David's* Im-

Eccles. 6. 3.

pre-

Psal. 8. 8.

V. 3, 5, 11, 12.

precations concerning wicked men, serve us for wishes concerning them? *As a snail which melteth, oh that every one of them had passed away, or like the untimely birth of a woman, that they had never seen the Sun.* Shall we provide our selves a Temptation, to curse our childrens day, as *Job* cursed his own, *Job 3.* *Let the day perish wherein they were born, and the night in which it was said, they are conceived; Let darknesse and the shadow of death staine it; let a clond dwell upon it; let the blacknesse of the day terrifie it; why died they not from the womb? why did they not give up the ghost, when they came out of the belly? why did the knees prevent them? or why the breasts that they should suck?* To suffer them to perish for lack of knowledge, may it not put us upon all this?

Were we so joyfull when we had them, and shall we not tremble to think, that when we shall have them no more the *Deuil* will? and can any thing else be their lot, if for want of instruction they dy in no better a condition than they were born? Did the *Mother* forget all the anguish of her travail for joy that they were borne into this world? and will she not endeavour to provide against the swallowing up of all this joy, by a just feare lest they should dy eternally in the next? And for what but a land of darknesse, can a condition of darknesse qualifie them?

Do we set so invaluable a rate upon them, and shall not their immortall part be considered in the account?

Are we so carefull to keep them, that we think no pain, trouble, cost, too much to save their *lives*? and shall we lay out none of all this to save their *souls*? Do

Do we grieve at such a rate when we lose them, and shall we not strive to make our losse as easie as we can? that when God doth take them from us, he may take them to *himself*? And have we any warrant to beleeve that God will take whom he doth not know? or know those that were never taught to know him?

Can we *Lament* over every misery of theirs else, and not be troubled at the misery of their Soules? weep, and pray, and advise, when they are sicke, and not afford them a teare, a prayer, an instruction as they are sinfull? Do we well to feel the pain of their bodies, which they feel themselves, and to be insensible of the blindness of their souls, which they feel not?

Can we *rejoyce* at all other good that betides them, and endeavour the procurement of it, and have we no affections to bestow upon their best good? Are we glad that they have health, and indifferent whether they have Grace? glad they have an interest in the world, indifferent whether they have an interest in Christ? If we seriously *Catechize* our selves at some such rate as this, and find how unable we are to answer that sin and folly which carries all our love to our children, only to their outward concerns, God might blesse it into a diversion of much of it towards their Souls, and if the flame once break out at any rate this way, we will not doubt, but 'twill sufficiently *light and warm* you in this great duty.

4. The promise you made when your children were baptized, was it not to instruct them in the knowledge of Christ to whom you dedicated them.

in that ordinance? breach of promise, specially breach of promise, where the interest of Christ, and of pretious Souls is so much concerned, is not a sin of an ordinary *magnitude*. We hope we shall not find one amongst you all that is incorrigibly guilty, and so shall not upon the offer of any child to Baptisme hereafter be necessitated to demurre whether it be not our duty to deny it you, or at least to defer it.

3. *In relation to your servants.*

All that we have said already of the duty you owe to your whole Families, as we have remembered you, how special an interest your children have in it, so we think it expedient to adde a little in particular reference to your servants; to prevent any temptation you may have of supposing the care of their souls to be none at all of your concernment. We shall lay what we have here to adde, before you in a very few words.

1. 'Tis not for nothing that the *title of father* is bestowed upon Heads of Families in relation to more persons, than the children of their bodies: they are *fathers* to their servants, 2 *King*. 5. 13. you can never make that title good, unlesse you exercise a *fatherly* care over them, nor doth any care so well deserve this *honourable* appellation, as a care of their souls, which you can no way better expresse, than by causing them to be *instructed* in the way to Heaven.

2. They are advantageous members of your Families, and in the sweat of their Browes doe ye eat much of your bread. In the Inventory of mens estates are servants reckoned as a part of their riches,

riches, *Gen.* 12. 16. and 24. 35. and 26. 14. and 30. 43. and 32. 5. 2 *Kings* 5. 26. *Eccles.* 2. 7. Shall they serve you, and can you be carelesse whether they serve God or no? that you pay them the wages of their work, what will it profit them, if you endeavour not to bring them to Christ, that they may not receive the wages of their sins?

3. Very much of your interest is wrapt up in their Piety, we mean your interest as to outward things, your affaires will prosper the better in their hands; even wicked masters have found godly servants a great blessing, pray read *Gen.* 39. 2. 3. and *Chap.* 30. 27. *Philemon* *Ver.* 10, 11. and see if all that you have at home and abroad, your Tillage, your Cattle, your Trading, will not fare the better in case you teach your servants how to serve the Lord Christ as well as your selves.

4. Set before your eyes the practice of the Saints; *Abraham* had in his Family 318 *Servants*, and they are all said to be his trained, or instructed servants, instructed and catechized in matters of Religion, what ever you do for them if you leave out this, do not even Publicans and sinners, yea do not the Heathen which know not God, the very same? yea

Juxta in loc.

5. Set the Catechizing of your servants in the things of God aside, and doe ye more for them than ye do for your beasts? have they victuals from you? so have all your Cattle: have they Clothing? so have your Horses if they want it: have they Lodging? so have your Oxen, yea your very Dogs? do ye endeavour to procure them Remedies when they are sick? so you do for your Swine: and are servants

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Basil. Daron.
l. 2. p. 95.

indeed of no more value than these? have they not souls capable of blessednesse as well as you? *you differ not in stuffe but in use, and that only by Gods ordinance, from the poorest servant in your Family.*

Ob. Our servants will not submit, and what then shall we do?

Sol. 1. We hope they will; we cannot think that any persons will be so base and low as to serve you, that will by no means be perswaded to serve God, or will submit to learn a Trade to live by, but not to be saved by: we hope at least better things.

Sol. 2. Have you Tryed? have you set it before them, and pressed it seriously, frequently, earnestly upon them as a duty? if you have not, we beseech you now to begin, let them see what they owe to God, to their own souls; yea what obedience they owe to *you*. Take the *Scriptures* in the *margin*, and lay them home upon their consciences, and in a way of prayer, from God expect the issue.

Sol. 3. What are you wont to doe, to make your servants comply in other things? use the same authority in this, if any will tell you, though you have a *coercive* power over your servants in other matters, yet you have none in this, that you may compell them to learne how you may be served, but not how themselves may be saved, pray take Time to beleve them, till they have told you by what authority *Abraham commanded his household to keep the way of the Lord*, and whether a *Civill* authority to command without a power to cause obedience, be of any signification? What commission

Matth. 8. 9.
Eph. 6. 5.
Coloss. 3. 22.
1 Tim. 6. 1, 2.
Titus 2. 9.

Gen. 18. 19.

Jacob

Jacob had to reforme his whole family, or how *Josua* will be excused from rashness in that resolute undertaking, that *He and his House would serve the Lord*? And untill they have offered you an expedient how you shall observe that Law of seeing the *Sabbath* sanctified by your *men servants* and *maid servants*, if God that hath made it your duty, shall account it your sin, to cause it to be put in execution. — But we hope (as we said) you will finde no such difficulty in a work of so much consequence; and that you may not, wee have a request,

Gen. 35. 2, 3, 4.

Josh. 24. 15.

Exod. 20. 10.

2. To all in our respective Parishes that are under the family-Government of others, *children* and *servants* of both *sexes*, of what age soever, if capable of being instructed; and our request is, for the Lords sake, for your souls sake, and as you will answer the contrary at your perill, when *the dead both small and great shall stand before God; and Christ shall come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that doe not know him. When He that made you will have no mercy on you, and He that formed you will shew you no favour; in case he finde you a people of no understanding: when every despiser of knowledge shall be eternally destroyed, that you would constantly use all Helps at home, and present your selves in the methode and order we shall appoint you to us your respective Ministers in the Congregation, to be Catechized and instructed in the necessary Grounds of Religion. Consider.*

Apoc. 20. 12.

2 Thes. 1. 8.

Isa. 27. 11.

Pro. 13. 13.

1. We are not setting up a *New* way of Teaching you, but *reviving* an *old* one, a way that the

Church of God hath walkt in, many ages before we were borne, the Church of God both *Jewish* and *Christian*: and in the Christian Church, men of the choicest *Character* for learning and piety, have discharged the office of *Catechizers*, as, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Origen*, *Optatus*, *Basil*, *Augustine*, *Ambrose*, *Cyrill*, &c. whole names we beleeve, many of you have heard of, as of men *famous* in their generations.

2. Its a way of *Teaching* that Christ himselfe in his child-hood was pleased to Honour with his presence; when he was Twelve yeares old, his parents found him in the Temple sitting in the midst of the *Doctours*, both hearing them and asking them *Questions*, Luc. 2. 46. This, as Learned men observe, was a meeting for *Catechizing*; and we will but offer it to your observation, whether the 47 verse (*and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers*) affordeth not ground enough to beleeve that Christ himselfe was *Catechized*, and gave *answers* to the *Questions* that were propounded to him. Dare you entertaine so much as a dreame of *salvation* by this Christ, and yet despise that ordinance which he hath Honoured?

3. How Honourable it is to *remember your Creator* in the dayes of your youth, to know God betimes. It is mentioned to the great credit of *Mnason*, that he was an *old Disciple*, one that had knowne and followed Christ a long time; of *Obadiab*, that he feared the Lord from his youth; of *Timothy*, that he had knowne the holy Scriptures from a childe; of *David*, that he made hast and delayed not to keep Gods *Commandments*; of *Andronicus* and *Junia*, that they

Chemnit. Hav.
Evang. c. 15.
Zanch. Vol. 3.
Tom. 8. p. 580.

E. clef. 12. 1.

Acts 21. 16.

1 King. 18. 12.

2 Tim. 3. 15.

Psal. 119. 60.

Rom. 16. 7.

they were in Christ before Paul; and it will be your Honour and happiness, to be instructed in the wayes of God betimes.

Ob. But some of us are very young, and we may stay a while; it will be Time enough to learne what belongs to Religion, and the wayes of God hereafter.

Sol. 1. *A child is to be Trained up in the way that he should walk, P. o. 22. 6.*

Sol. 2. If you that can make this objection be not too young to be damned, you cannot be too young to be *Catechized*; those that are old enough to *sin*, are old enough to *perish*; and there's *no life eternall*, but to know God, and *Jesus Christ* whom he hath sent, Joh 17. 3.

Ob. Some of us are at men and womens estate, ready to be married, and we are ashamed to come and stand among the little children to be *Catechized*.

Sol. 1. If you are ashamed that you have at this age need to be *Catechized*, tis a good signe, it proceeds (we hope) from a sense of your ignorance, and a conviction of your sinne, in neglecting this meanes of instruction all this while, and we shall look upon it as an Argument, that you will not goe on to sin against your consciences in neglecting it any longer.

2. If you be ashamed to own, and learne the Doctrine of Christ, see what impressions will be upon your spirits after you have laid to heart, that resolution of Christ, which you finde recorded, *Luke 9. 26. Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall*

shall come in his own glory, and in his Fathers, and of the holy Angels.

3. Whether doe you think it more advisable to goe to *Hell* with *graver* company, or to *Heaven*, with *children*? or doe ye beleieve you shall ever meet them at the *end*, with whom you are ashamed to be seen in the *way*?

4. That you are ready to be *married*, is an Argument that we wou'd borrow of you to perswade you to be the readier to be *Catechized*; will you enter into that relation, and not learne the duties of it? How will you that are to be a *Husband*, dwell with your wife according unto knowledge, if you suffer nothing to dwell with your selfe but ignorance? And how will you that are to be a *wife*, submit your selfe to your own husband, as it is fit in the Lord, if you doe not know the Lord? And how will both of you live together, as *Heires of the grace of life*, when through the ignorance that is in you, you are meere strangers to a life of *Grace*? Or how will you teach your *children* and *servants*, what you would never be perswaded to learne your selves? *Marriage* we know is common to mankinde, and *Heathens* may enter into it, but this we are constrained to let you know, that if persons professing *Christianity*, expect that we should have any hand in the celebration of it, between such among them as neither know their duty to God, nor to one another, nor will be perswaded to learne it, whether it be a duty incumbent upon us to doe it, we must, at least, take Time to consider.

Qu. What if we understand the principles of Religion well enough already?

Sol.

1 Pet. 3. 7.

Coloff. 3. 18.

Eph. 4. 18.

Sol. Yet you ought by your *Example* to encourage others, to let us that are your Ministers know it, that wee may blesse God for you, propound you as *patternes* to the rest, and receive from you an Evidence of your fitness for the *Lords Supper*, which if duly qualified you ought to partake of, and wee to administer. We hope we need not use more arguments, with persons that know they have soules, to prevaile with them for a compliance with us in those things that so apparently tend to their *salvation*.

Secondly, For *private Conference* with the *Heads* and *Governours* of families, wee have seriously and sadly considered the *ignorance* of many under a long enjoyment of the *meanes* of knowledge, and the *prophaneness* of more under as long an enjoyment of the *meanes* of Grace. And having nothing to adde to our *publique* ministeriall labours, as a further meanes of your proficiency in grace and knowledge, but a more familiar way of personall instruction by *Private Conference*, wee doe hereby offer our selves also to this service of your soules, and in the name of Christ (whole Messengers we are in this *errand*) beseech you to accept of it, and that it may reach the end that both wee and you ought to aime at, wee desire,

1. That wee may meet you, either at your houses asunder, or a greater number of you together at such Times and places, as wee shall appoint for that purpose; or if any inconvenience be found in what wee shall offer, you would be pleased to propound a better *methode* your selves, and wee shall readily comply with you in it.

2. That

2. That when you are come together, you would not necessitate us to be the onely *speakers*, but be ready to aske when you doe not *know*, and to expresse your selves (according to the matter in hand) so farre as ye doe *know*, that we may by this meanes informe our selves what acquaintance you have with the things of God, and be the better inabled to apply our selves to your respective conditions and necessities, as well in this as in other duties of our Ministry.

3. That you would come to it as to an *Ordinance* of God, *preventing* and *following* it by your prayers, that it may be blessed from Heaven to your edification; which wee beseech you to set on upon your Hearts by a serious perusall of the *Scriptures* in the *margin*.

Having already much exceeded the length wee first intended in this paper, wee shall trouble you but with a few words more; they shall be by way of *motive*, to perswade you not to frustrate the hopes wee have entertained of doing your *souls* good, by denying us an opportunity of attempting it, in this familiar way. Let us lay before you, and the LORD in mercy lay it home upon your Hearts;

1. The necessity of *knowing* the Things of God, or of *perishing* to all eternity, *Joh. 17. 3. Isa. 27. 11. 2 Thess. 1. 8. Prov. 29. 18. Hosea 4. 6. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.*

2. The great sin you are guilty of, if you doe not *voluntarily* and *earnestly* seek after it, *Mal. 2. 7. Prov. 2. 3, 4. and Chap. 15. 14. and 18. 15. and 23. 12.*

3. The

Deut. 6. 7.
Mal. 3. 16.
Heb. 10. 24,
25.
Rom. 14. 19.
& 15. 14.
1 Thess. 5. 11.
Heb. 3. 13.
Luc. 24. 14,
15.

3. The inexcusable aggravation of this sin, if ye despise it, being offered unto you, *Job 21. 14. Prov. 1. from vers. 20. to the end of the Chapter, Matth. 10. 14, 15. and 23. 37, 38. Acts 13. 46.*

4. The obedience ye owe unto us in what ever concerns the good of your souls, *Heb. 13. 17.* and the reflexion of what ever contempt you entertaine this advice of ours withall, upon that great and glorious God that sends it you by us, *Luke 10. 16. 1 Thess. 4. 8.*

5. The much more Time, then will be taken up in this duty, which most of you spend about what will doe your soules no good, and some of you about what doth them *harne*; and how you will come by confidence to look Christ in the face, at the day of judgement, when you will not *redeeme* your Time out of the hands of the *world*, or *idlenes*, or *recreations*, or *drinke*, or *carnall company*, or *any vanity*, that He may visit you with his salvation.

6. The Example of others in divers places of the *Nation*, where Ministers and people come frequently together for this purpose. Though this *Island*, of all the *Brittish* Provinces was the *last* that received the Gospel of Christ, wee hope you will not, for your parts suffer it to observe the same order in submitting to all meanes of knowing and enjoying Christ in the Gospel.

Wee shall conclude all with our prayers that you may, and our hopes that you will doe more then wee have said; but if *any* of you (for wee know some of you too well, to doubt of your compli-

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Postquam omnes Britanniarum provinciae fidem christi suscepissent, suscepit & haec Insula Vecta.
Camden.

ance) shall refuse to be perswaded to the duties wee have mentioned, assure your selves that even this paper shall be a witnesse against you at the day of Judgement, which is sent you (the Lord knowes) to no such purpose, by

*Yours in the service
of the Gospel,*

Robert Tuchin Minister of Newport.

John Barnes Minister of Whippingham.

Edward Buckler Minister at Calbourne.

Robert Dingley Minister of Brixton.

James Creswick Minister of Fresh-water.

John Martyn Minister of the Gospel at Tarmouth.

Vincent Sparke Minister of Shalfleet.

Josb: Tompkins Minister at Brooke.

Simon Pole Minister at West Cowes.

Tho: Clarke Minister of Gods-hill.

William Harby Minister of Shanklin.

Martin Wells Minister of Taverland.

William Bicknell Minister of the Gospel at Newport.

Richard Bemister Minister of Wotton.

Matthew Hearne Minister of Lawrence.

Finis.